

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL FINDS OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

## Cassette-player Tape Recorded Tour of the Exhibition

Welcome to the Exhibition of Archaeological Finds of the People's Republic of China. The works you will be seeing cover China's historical and cultural development from the Old Stone Age to the 14th century A. D., but the artifacts represent only a small part of those discovered since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949.

When you want to do some looking on your own, merely push the black switch with the red top at the end of your Cassette Player to the STOP position. Then when you are ready to continue, push the same switch to the PLAY POSITION, and you will not miss a word. On the side of your Cassette-Player is a VOLUME control, and I would appreciate it if you would keep the sound as low as possible so others will not be disturbed. Just one more thing --- from time to time you will hear a sound like this:

## SIGNAL

That is your signal to turn off your Cassette-Player to the STOP position until you have reached the next object on our tour. I will direct you to each work, and you will find it indicated on the map that has been given you. In the exhibition, a marker in red on the label identifies each stop on the recorded tour.

The installation is arranged chronologically and we will begin with the Paleolithic or Old Stone Age. Our first Stop, 1 a is on the pedestal Directly in front of you.

SIGNAL

#2 Stop No. 1 a is a modern bust, reconstructing the probable appearance of Lantian Man who lived approximately 600,000 years ago. In the case to your right, and again right you will find Stop No. 1 b.

SIGNAL

#5 In this case are reproductions of skull fragments of the later Peking Man. Both these inhabitants of the Old Stone Age were able to fashion and use simple tools to aid them in hunting and fishing. That Peking Man could also utilize and control fire is indicated by the bits of charred earth taken from where the tools were found.

From these early anthropological remains, let us move on to a much later piece -- pottery -- which was developed in the New Stone Age, or Neolithic period. Stop No. 2 is in the corner case directly behind you.

SIGNAL

## Stop 2

#29

Stop No. 2 is a bowl made about 6,000 years ago by people of the Yaugshao culture at the site of Panpo Village, Sian. After firing, the clay pottery of these Neolithic villagers assumed a red body which was burnished and then painted with lively decorative patterns. This one is embellished inside with circular human faces; attached to them are triangles resembling fish. And, furthermore, the net designs have been interpreted as highly stylized fish.

Pottery of a later date, but still in the Neolithic period, can be seen at our next stop, No. 3. It is located further along the course in a recessed triangular case. Please consult your map.

SIGNAL

## STOP 3

#55-57        At Stop No. 3 are two pottery cups and a cooking vessel, made about 4,000 years ago during the epoch which archaeologists term the Lungshan culture. Thrown on a potter's wheel, they are exquisite in form displaying superb workmanship. The virtuosity of the potter is clearly evident in the even, egg-shell-thin lip of the tall cup at the left. By the way, the container can be removed from its long stem. Typical of much Lungshan ware is the rich, glossy black surface.

#56

We will now leave the primitive cultures and move into recorded history. China has a recorded history of nearly four thousand years. Works of the Shang dynasty which lasted from the 16th to the 11th century B. C. are in the next room. Stop No. 4 will be in a free-standing case in the center of the room slightly to the left upon entering.

SIGNAL

## Stop 4

#78

An outstanding achievement of the Shang period was the use of high-temperature firing to produce proto-porcelain. Stop No. 4 is the earliest example of this craft so far found in China. Porcelain, as opposed to pottery, is whiter, harder, and translucent. This is due to the purity of its fine white clay, called kaolin, and to the intensity of the heat at which the clay is baked -- about 2500° F. Although this piece does not have the lightness and delicacy of later porcelain production, of which it is a forerunner, the yellow-gray and green glazes are skillfully handled. The surface is impressed with a meticulous, geometric pattern around the shoulder, which contrasts with the long, waving lines on the belly.

In the case directly behind you and recessed into the wall, are exceptionally fine examples of Shang bronze casting -- at Stop 5.

SIGNAL

## STOP 5

#70, 72, The four ritual vessels at Stop No. 5 are cooking  
73, 74 utensils and wine or food containers. The art of bronze  
casting was the main craft of Shang times, and these  
examples display technical features of the early phase  
of production. If you look at the openings in the  
#70 foot-rims of the vessels, you will see how thin the  
walls are -- how skillfully the casting was accomplished.  
Also notice that the animated decoration of scrolls  
and animal masks is held in check by being contained  
in registers. These pieces are small in scale. That  
small size and low relief are typical of early Shang  
bronzes will become more apparent when we examine  
the monumental works of the later Shang era further  
on in the exhibition.

Before we look at more bronzes, however, let us  
stop at No. 6, immediately behind you on the wall to the  
right of the entrance to the next room.

SIGNAL

#85 &amp; 86

Stop No. 6. These two oracle bones were excavated from the ruins of Yin, an ancient Shang capital established after 1300 B. C.

By means of oracle bones, Shang rulers addressed questions to the spirit of their deceased ancestors. The questions -- relating to war, hunting, farming, or ritual sacrifices -- were carved by scribes on the shoulder blades of oxen such as these -- or on tortoise shells. More than 5,000 different characters of fairly well-developed form have been distinguished in these inscriptions, which make up the earliest written language yet discovered in China. After the questions have been recorded, a diviner applied a hot metal point to the depression cut into one side of the bone or shell; the heat caused the cracks which you see on the reverse. The diviner interpreted these cracks as a reply.

We mentioned earlier that the Shang excelled in bronze casting. By the 11th century B. C., the craft had reached a high level of perfection. An excellent example can be seen at our next stop, No. 7, the rectangular vessel in the free-standing case to your right in the next area.

SIGNAL

## Stop 7

#91

Stop No. 7 is a four-legged cooking vessel. It is grander in scale than the earlier Shang works we discussed; its ornamentation, more elaborate and in higher relief. The four sides are decorated with human masks. Although of different sizes, they are identical in expression and features. In the light of other Shang bronzes, the use of human faces -- quite realistic in appearance -- is extremely unusual. You might compare this piece with others in this room.

#88

You may wish to turn off your Cassette-Recorder and examine them more carefully before moving on to Stop No. 8. It is located in the next room, in the end of the case to your right.

SIGNAL

## Stop 8

#93

No. 8 is an early bronze of the Western Chou period, which lasted from the 11th century to 770 B.C. The wine mixer is finely modelled and elaborately decorated. The lid is in the shape of a two-horned mythical animal with strange creatures projecting from its body, while highly stylized animal masks decorate the sides. Typical of many early Chou ritual vessels, this example contains an inscription. The twenty characters on the interior state that it was made for offering sacrifices to an ancestor named "Chi."

Compare this early Chou bronze with a somewhat later work at No. 9, the free-standing case a few feet to your right.

SIGNAL

## Stop 9

#97

Stop No. 9 is also a ritual wine vessel, but much less elaborate in shape and surface ornamentation than the piece just discussed. Typical of later Western Chou bronzes, it is simply decorated with undulating bands, some forming stylized animal patterns. The clean, elegant profile is interrupted only by the handles -- modelled in the form of animal heads with rings dangling from their mouths.

Stop 10, is the set of bronze bells in the long case opposite the door, and should be viewed with the largest bell on your left.

SIGNAL

## Stop 10

#107 - 115 The bronze bells at Stop No. 10 were among the lavish burial accessories discovered in the tomb of a Chinese aristocrat, the Marquis of Tsai, who died in the 5th century B. C. The bells are not fitted with clappers but must be struck, like a gong, from the outside. Each of the nine produces a different note. The Marquis lived during a time called the Spring and Autumn Period when numerous vassal states were growing in power and vying with each other for political control. The inscriptions on the bells record the relationship between the two states of Tsai and Chu.

Let us briefly examine a bronze wine vessel from this period. No. 11 is in the next room. Please consult your map.

SIGNAL

#117

Stop No. 11. The wine vessel is typical of the bronzes of the Spring and Autumn Period in its large size and elaborate ornamentation. The foot rim and the top of the lid have interlaced serpent and dragon openwork; Openwork is characteristic of many Spring and Autumn bronzes. In spite of its large size, the vessel retains a clarity of form usually associated with smaller objects. Its silhouette is simple and clean, while its decoration, though intricate and complex, is orderly.

The Spring and Autumn Period, which ended in 476 B.C., was followed by the tumultuous Warring States Period, to which the next part of the exhibition is devoted. Stop No. 12 is the large knocker in the corridor outside this room.

SIGNAL

Although the Warring States Period was a time of political turmoil, it was also an era of artistic creativity. At No. 12 is an ornate bronze knocker in the shape of a fantastic animal mask. It is the largest and finest of such objects yet discovered. A ring is suspended from the creature's grotesquely protruding tongue. Multiple-headed, mythical beasts are interlaced to form a pattern on the surface, while a stately phoenix projects from the animal's forehead. The whole is a stunning example of the skill and imagination of the bronze-casters of this period.

At our next stop, No. 13, we will discuss some of the methods used in creating such metal objects. it is located on the other side of the partition.

SIGNAL

#130-132

No. 13. The objects in this case were among the more than 30,000 pottery molds excavated at Houma, Shansi Province, in 1959 and 60. They provide invaluable insight into the piece-mold casting technique of the Warring States Period. In this case are pottery models; the larger, on the right, is a relief of an elaborate animal mask, the small one on the shelf is half of a three-dimensional animal head. Around such models, outer molds were constructed like the three pieces to the left. These represent the two sides of a tiger and its base. When fitted together, molten bronze was poured into the hollow areas, through the grooves you see around the animal's profile. After the bronze had solidified, the outer molds were removed, leaving a metal replica of the original clay model. Note the fine workmanship in these examples. The expert ~~carp~~ craftsmen had to make sharp details in the models and molds so that the cast bronze<sup>s</sup> would have clarity and precision.

Often, bronze objects were further embellished with other metals. A good example of this kind of ornamentation can be seen at Stop No. 14, right behind you.

SIGNAL

#133

Stop No. 14 is a tou or food vessel inlaid with gold, a technical innovation of the Warring States Period. Wherever gold appears, shallow grooves had to be cut into the bronze. These were filled with thin segments of the more precious metal, and then the entire surface was ground down until even and smooth. This tou's handsome decoration consists of bands of dragons, so stylized as to be virtually unrecognizable.

The Warring States Period was followed by the Chin dynasty. It was the first time in Chinese history that a unified feudal country under centralized authority had been founded. The large kneeling statue, No. 15, is in a free-standing case in the next room.

SIGNAL

#139        This female figure was found near the burial mound of Chin Shih Huang, the first Chin emperor, who died in 210 B. C. Made of pottery, the woman kneels with quiet dignity, her head held upright, her placid face devoid of expression. Her hands, one clenched, the other open, rest on her lap. The large scale is rare for sculptures of human beings at this early period. You may be interested ~~to notice~~ that the woman's head and arms were made separately and that her body is hollow.

The next series of rooms is devoted to the Han dynasty, which succeeded the Chin in 206 B. C. and lasted to 220 A. D. Stop 16 is on the other side of the central partition in a case in the corner of the room.

SIGNAL

#141

This wine vessel is an exceptionally fine example of bronze work, bringing to perfection technical skills which we have observed in the food container of the Warring States Period. The entire surface is inlaid with meticulous patterns of gold and silver. The elegantly looping lines actually make up twenty-nine different characters of "bird script" -- an ornamental style of Chinese writing. A section is enlarged in the wall stencil. In brief, the inscription can be translated: "Eat well and be merry, keep illness away and enjoy long life".

This vessel is one of more than 2,800 burial items discovered in the tombs of Tou Wan and her husband, Prince Liu Sheng, half brother of the Han emperor Wu. Other objects from these tombs can be seen at Stops No. 17 and 18. In the next room is the jade burial suit of Princess Tou Wan, Stop No. 17

SIGNAL

#147

This extravagant jade suit was used as Tou Wan's shroud. It consists of 2,160 pieces linked together with gold wire at the corners of each plate. The amount of precious metal -- 700 grams -- is not as impressive as the technical skill: the wire was so finely made that the entire suite was assembled with only a little over a pound and a half of gold ! Jade funerary suits sewn with this metal were reserved for the highest members of the aristocracy. The shrouds of those lower in rank were assembled with silver or copper. Tou Wan's head rested on a bronze pillow, gilded and inlaid with jade, and in each hand, she held a crescent-shaped jade ritual object. Jade was attributed with preservative powers, and its lavish use was to prevent the corpse from decaying.

When you have finished examining this magnificent burial costume, you will find Stop No. 18, in the next room.

SIGNAL

#164, 165

At Stop No. 18 are two tiny bronze leopards which were found in these royal tombs. The sleek bodies are partially gilded and inlaid with silver forming prunus-blossom designs for the leopards' spots. The eyes are set with bright crimson gems, slightly tinged with yellow. Viewed from any angle, the cats are stunning creatures. These superlative compositions on such a small scale testify to the skill of the Han craftsman.

Continue on through the course to the large room beyond (consult your map) to Stop No. 19, one of a number of other superb Han pieces in the show.

SIGNAL

#204

No. 19. The large bronze vessel has an elaborate inscription running around its rim, stating that it was made for Hu Fu and dating it 26 B.C. The huge bowl is supported by three crouching tigers, while bands of romping animals decorate the side. In the upper section are more tigers, rabbits, deer, and sheep; beneath them, elephants, deer, bears, camels, and warriors appear. This tsun, or wine container, is gilded, and the lively creatures are toned with silver. Originally their features and outlines were painted in black, white, and red, but only traces of color now remain.

The skill and ingenuity of the Han craftsman can be further demonstrated at Stop 20. It is located to your right in a case projecting from the wall.

SIGNAL

#203 Cast in bronze, the hollow tube at Stop No. 20 simulates a bamboo stem; it was used as a chariot ornament. Each of its four sections is inlaid with delicate gold and silver patterns and studded with brilliant turquoise. If you look carefully, you can see that the four scenes depict myriad hunters and wild beasts amid fantastic gardens. In spite of the glittering colors and swirling activity, the whole conveys a sense of unity and order.

At our next stop, we can see an example of wood sculpture. No. 21 is the charging unicorn located in the case behind you.

SIGNAL

#208

The unicorn at Stop No. 21 was part of the burial accessories of a Han nobleman of the 2nd century A.D. With lowered head and tautly stretched legs, the animal appears ready to charge. The simple, yet forceful, lines vividly convey the sense of brute strength and forward motion. It is constructed of several pieces of wood, and the marks of the carving tools are clearly evident, animating the surfaces.

The Han craftsman's ability to imbue his sculpture with life is more impressively apparent at the work in the circular room beyond the doorway.

SIGNAL

#218

At No. 22 is one of the most extraordinary examples of sculpture yet found in China. A bronze horse gallops through space, its head and tail held high. In the midst of flight, one hoof lightly brushes the back of an airborne swallow. The bird looks around as the larger but swifter creature passes it by. The spirited animal is an embodiment of vitality and beauty -- a tribute to the genius of its unknown Han creators.

The horse was discovered in an Eastern Han dynasty tomb of the 2nd century A. D. Other objects from this same tomb can be seen at No. 23 through the next doorway.

SIGNAL

#219-234

At Stop 23 is a cortège of horses, carriages, drivers, and attendants from the same enormous tomb as the magnificent piece we just saw. Part of the larger set shown in the photomural, these bronzes are brilliantly conceived and executed. The animals are vigorous in form and varied in posture, and the entire group vividly illustrates the pomp and splendor of noble processions of that period.

After examining the cortège, move on to the next room where you will find works of the Southern and Northern Dynasties, a period lasting from 420 A.D. to 589 A. D. Stop 24 is in the next room on the far wall, to the <sup>right</sup>  of the door to the room beyond.

SIGNAL

#245

Stop No. 24 is an elaborately carved block of sandstone, used as the base of a wooden pillar. Three of the corner figures play musical instruments, while the fourth one dances. Their fully rounded bodies are typical of the figural sculpture of this period. Above them, interlaced dragons float on the crest of a stylized wave pattern; at the top, lotus blossoms encircle the socket. The intricate workmanship and deep undercutting lend the piece a lacelike delicacy, visually contradicting the hardness of the material.

Our next stop is located in the second room beyond.

As you walk along be sure to note the exquisite silk, cotton, and woolen fabrics. These were made between the 1st and 7th centuries A. D. and were discovered along the Old Silk Route, connecting China to the eastern Mediterranean across central Asia. Stop No. 25 is in the next room to the right as you enter. Please consult your map.

SIGNAL

#273

Stop 25 The stately figure was made during the Sui dynasty, which succeeded the Northern and Southern Dynasties in 581. The armed attendant, erect and alert, guarded a general's tomb. The body of the porcelain statuette is covered with a sparkling white glaze, while details -- like the gown's lining, the headdress, and scabbard -- are accentuated in black. White porcelain of this kind was an innovation of the period, making possible the justly famous ceramic wares of the later Tang and Sung dynasties.

The Tang dynasty, founded in 618, was an era of prosperity, and the next series of rooms is devoted to the outstanding crafts of that time. Stop 26 is on the other side of the partition in front of you, in a case in the corner.

SIGNAL

#274-295

The precious metal objects in this case, No. 26 , are part of a treasure found at the site of a mansion belonging to a Tang aristocrat. Of the more than a thousand pieces discovered, 216 were made of solid gold or silver. These cups and bowls have been given sumptuous textures by masterful embossing and engraving.

In the case behind you, you can see a number of smaller boxes and trays variously containing amethyst, cinnabar, amber, stalactite, or rock crystal. These, when ground to powder, were used as ingredients for medicine. Other vessels were for preparing the medicinal potions and for practicing alchemy. After you have finished looking at them individually, Stop 27 is located in the center of the next room.

SIGNAL

#296-297

The horses at No. 27 are superb examples of the famous Tang dynasty three-color pottery. To the clear, creamy glaze of the Sui period, the Tang potter added metal colorants; when fired, these produced rich browns, yellows, and greens. In body and posture, these animals are more naturalistic than any of the earlier pieces we have seen in the exhibition; one horse neighs with lifted head, another grazes with head down. All these come from the lavish tomb of Princess Yung Tai, granddaughter of Wu, the famous Tang empress.

Yung Tai was buried in 706 with more than 1,000 funeral accessories. The walls and ceilings of her burial chambers were richly painted, and a copy of one of the murals can be seen on the side wall of this room -- Stop 28.

SIGNAL

#306

This brightly colored mural portrays a throng of attendants, ready to serve the young Chinese princess in death. Fashionably attired in flowing gowns, the ladies proffer cosmetics, fans, candles, a back scratcher, and other toilet articles. The fluid lines of the women's costumes and their animated postures convey a sense of life and activity that vividly captures the courtly life of the period.

Other superb examples of Tang dynasty ware can be seen in the next rooms. Look at them at your leisure, and I will rejoin you at Stop 29 which is a vase on a free-standing pedestal in the second room beyond this one. Please consult your map.

SIGNAL

#329

Stop 29 The Tang dynasty fell in 907 A.D.

and was followed in rapid succession by five other short dynasties. This vase was made during the era known in Chinese history as the Five Dynasties. Called Yueh ware, this kind of porcelain was produced in a great variety of forms and types. As here, however, the decoration was usually simple, enhancing the vessel's elegant profile. With undulating lines, the artist painted the surface with floral patterns in brown. The entire piece was then glazed with a transparent green, tinged with yellow.

Porcelain making developed considerably during the following period -- the Sung dyansty, which lasted from 960 to 1279 A. D. Examples can be seen at Stop 30 the case to your right in the corner of this room.

SIGNAL

#333-336  
338

Called Ting ware, the examples in the case at No. 30 were part of ceremonial treasures deposited in the foundations of two pagodas of 10th-century Buddhist monasteries. Smooth and white, their bodies were constructed of the finest grained clay. Only a lustrous, transparent glaze highlights their surface ornamentation. The exquisite porcelain shell, with incised wave patterns, simulates the real conches that were used by monks as trumpets during religious services.

Sung porcelains of a different type can be seen at No. 31, in a case in the corridor outside this room on the reverse side of the double case immediately to your left as you leave this room.

SIGNAL

Stop 31

32

#343-345

The misty blue Ying-ching ware at Stop 31 was an innovation of the Sung dynasty. If you look at the rims of the bowls, you can see how extraordinarily thin they are. In areas where the surfaces have been incised, the light blue glaze filled the hollows and thus appears darker, as though the patterns existed within the translucent walls. The beauty of Ying-ching ware was widely appreciated, finding markets both in China and abroad.

The last part of the exhibition is devoted to works from the 12th, 13th, and 14th centuries. Stop 32 is the group of figurines in the case at the end of the corridor to you right.

SIGNAL

#359-361

These three pottery figures at No. 32 are impressive evidence of the rich and varied theatrical arts that flourished during the Yuan dynasty, which was founded in 1271 and lasted until 1368. One actor dances, one steps sideways with clappers in hand, and one whistles. Their movements are vigorous, their gestures lively, as though caught in the midst of some spectacular performance of a drama.

In contrast to these animated actors, the figure at our next Stop, 33, is a personification of dignity and repose. It is located in the case at the end, to your left of the next room.

SIGNAL

Stop 33

34

#362

At No. 33 is a statuette of the deity Kuanyin.

She wears an elaborate diadem, and jewelled ornaments embellish her robes.

In carrying out their surveys, archaeologists never know exactly what they will find. Like many artifacts, this exquisite piece of Ying-ching ware was an unexpected benefit of an archaeological program.

In 1955 and the following years, the Chinese were systematically uncovering the fortified walls of Tatu, the Yuan capital, which lies beneath modern Peking.

During the excavations, a large number of early fourteenth century porcelains, such as this statuette, were discovered. The superb workmanship and the intricate details of the Kuanyin provide evidence that ancient Tatu was a rich and sophisticated metropolis.

Another remarkable piece of porcelain found in the remains of the Yuan capital is an early example of the famous blue-and-white ware. Stop 34 is located on the free-standing pedestal behind you.

SIGNAL

#364

Porcelain underwent a major development by the craftsmen of the Yuan dynasty. In contrast to the purely glazed, simply decorated wares favored in the Sung dynasty, many Yuan pieces, like this stunning example at No. 34, have exuberant decorations. The intricate leaf sprays and floral motifs were painted in cobalt blue and then covered with a lustrous, transparent glaze -- hence, the name "underglazing" for this technique. Here, the undulating silhouette of the vase, with its lotus-leaf lid, harmonizes with the delicate flower patterns.

We will conclude the tour with another exceptional example of this blue-and-white ware at Stop 35 on the free-standing pedestal in the next room.

SIGNAL

# 369      The surface of this octagonal porcelain vase ornamented with dragons is even more intricately patterned than that of the previous example. Not only were decorations added in blue but also the dragons' scales were incised. With such imaginative craftsmanship, it is not surprising that these exquisite pieces found a ready world market.

I hope that you enjoyed yourself during our tour and that you will return to visit this show again. We have had time to point out a very limited number of pieces in this large exhibition. And they, in turn, are only a fraction of the archaeological materials discovered since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949. We hope that the exhibition will contribute to the promotion of understanding and friendship between the people of China and other countries.

Now please return you Cassette-Recorder to the check-in desk at the EXIT of the exhibition so that someone else may use it. When you hear the signal, please push the red-topped switch to the STOP position.

Thank you

SIGNAL

SIGNAL

SIGNAL